

Solutions  
Answers  
Answers A:  
Q: Results  
Responses  
Questions



## **HALTEMPRICE & HOWDEN BY-ELECTION**

### **SUMMARY REPORT**

**Table of Contents**

---

1. Table of contents	2
2. Background information	3
3. Summary report	7
3.1 Ease of ballot form completion	7
3.2 Ease of finding favoured candidate's name	7
3.3 Surprise to find two candidate columns	8
3.4 Two columns vs one	8
3.5 Satisfaction with the process of voting	9
4. The questionnaire	11

## 2. Background information

The Haltemprice and Howden by-election took place under unusual circumstances. Shadow Home Secretary David Davis, MP for the constituency, resigned his front bench position and his seat, in order to re-stand for election seeking a platform to highlight his personal concern that civil liberties were being eroded under the present government. The two other main political parties, Labour and the Liberal Democrats, declined to field a candidate, due to opposing and supporting Davis' stand respectively.

However, a myriad of other candidates and parties did not subscribe to the Labour or Liberal Democrat positions and instead stood against Davis in the by-election. In total, 26 candidates contested the seat. The by-election took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (with a turnout of 34%), and in order to accommodate the large number of candidates the ballot paper had two columns of candidates rather than the usual one, a step away from normal Parliamentary electoral practice.

Given that the Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to report on the conduct of elections (including by-elections) and more generally on the efficacy of the electoral process, it asked ICM to gauge the response of voters towards this ballot paper design. In order to meet this requirement, we undertook an exit poll on polling day at a random selection of polling stations within the Haltemprice and Howden constituency.

ICM interviewed a random sample of 849 adults aged 18+ immediately after they had voted. The 'next' voter was approached for interview after the completion of the previous interview at each polling station selected.

A random sample of 25 polling stations was selected using a two stage, stratified approach (by ward) with a probability of voter selection proportionate to polling station size. All polling stations in the constituency were stratified by ward, and then within each ward, the polling stations were rank ordered by the total number of electors permitted to vote at each. Using a random start, fixed interval technique we then selected every 'n'th one. This means that larger, rather than smaller polling stations were more likely to be selected because, of course, more electors will be voting at them. The selected polling stations were as follows:

Ward	Voters	Address 1	Address 2
Beverley Rural	862	Village Hall	North Newbold
Cottingham North	1332	Polling Station no 1	Cottingham
Cottingham North	913	Mobile unit	Cottingham
Cottingham South	1831	Christ Church	Cottingham
Cottingham South	1351	Croxby C.P School	Cottingham
Cottingham South	1206	Mobile Unit	Cottingham
Dale	2148	Elloughton Primary School	Elloughton
Dale	1628	Brough Primary School	Elloughton
Dale	1412	Polling Station No 1	Brough
Dale	919	Polling Station No 2	Brough
Howden	1582	Shire Hall	Howden
Howdenshire	1382	Polling staion no 1	Gilberdyke
Howdenshire	1237	Polling Station no 1	Holme-upon-Spalding Moor
Howdenshire	957	Room adj. to Community Centre	Bubwith
Howdenshire	222	Methodist Chapel	Foggathorpe

South Hunsley	1643	North Ferriby Meth. Church Schoolroom	North Ferriby
South Hunsley	1573	Village Hall	North Ferriby
South Hunsley	1434	St. Barnabas Church Hall	Swanland
Tranby	1513	Anlaby Village Hall	Anlaby
Tranby	1257	Christchurch United Reformed Church	Anlaby
Tranby	892	Mobile Unit	Anlaby Common
Willerby & Kirk Ella	2072	Scout/Guide Hall	Kirk Ella
Willerby & Kirk Ella	2018	St.Andrew's Church Memorial Hall	Kirk Ella
Willerby & Kirk Ella	1461	Willerby & Kirk Ella	Willerby
Willerby & Kirk Ella	820	Scout HQ	Willerby

Interviewers covered half days at their allocated polling station, covering opening hours of between 7am-2.30pm or 2.30pm-10pm.

It should be remembered at all times that a sample and not the entire population has been interviewed. Consequently, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which mean that not all differences are statistically significant.

We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values (if everyone in the population had been interviewed) from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times answers are given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 95 times out of 100 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and the percentage results at the 95% confidence level.

**Table 1.1. Sampling tolerances**

SAMPLE SIZE	SAMPLING TOLERANCES APPLICABLE TO %'S AT OR NEAR		
	10% OR 90% + / -	30% OR 70% + / -	50% + / -
100 interviews	5.88%	8.98%	9.80%
500 interviews	2.63%	4.02%	4.38%
849 interviews	2.02%	3.08%	3.36%

For example, with a sample size of 849 interviews where 50% (the worst case scenario as far as tolerances are concerned) give a particular answer, we can be 95% certain that the 'true' value will fall within the range of 3.36% from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample (say, between men and women), different results may be obtained. The difference may be 'real' or it may occur by chance (because a sample rather than the entire population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one, i.e. if it is 'statistically significant', we again have to know the size of the samples, the % giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume the 95% confidence level again, the differences between the results of two separate groups must be greater than the values given in the table below:

**Table 1.2 Tests for statistical significance**

SAMPLE SIZES TO BE COMPARED	DIFFERENCES REQUIRED TO BE STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT AT OR NEAR		
	10% OR 90% + / -	30% OR 70% + / -	50% + / -
100 and 100	8.3%	12.7%	13.9%
200 and 200	5.9%	8.9%	9.8%
500 and 500	3.7%	5.7%	6.2%
1000 and 1000	2.6%	4.0%	4.4%

**Table 1.3 Social class definitions**

Most market research projects classify the population into social grades, usually on the basis of the Market Research Society occupational groupings (MRS, 1991).

They are defined as follows:

A.	Professionals such as doctors, solicitors or dentists, chartered people like architects; fully qualified people with a large degree of responsibility such as senior civil servants, senior business executives and high ranking grades within the armed forces. Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows.
B.	People with very senior jobs such as university lecturers, heads of local government departments, middle management in business organizations, bank managers, police inspectors, and upper grades in the armed forces.
C1.	All others doing non-manual jobs, including nurses, technicians, pharmacists, salesmen, publicans, clerical workers, police sergeants and middle ranks of the armed forces.
C2.	Skilled manual workers, foremen, manual workers with special qualifications such as lorry drivers, security officers and lower grades of the armed forces.
D.	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, including laborers and those serving apprenticeships. Machine minders, farm laborers, lab assistants and postmen.
E.	Those on the lowest levels of subsistence including all those dependent upon the state long-term. Casual workers, and those without a regular income.

### Profile of the electorate in Haltemprice and Howden.

The following table shows the demographic characteristics of people in the constituency who are entitled to vote. It is compared against the profile of voters who were interviewed on the exit survey. It should be remembered, of course, that voters are NOT the same thing as eligible members of the electorate.

Table 1.4. Electorate profile vs. exit voter profile

	Census 2001	Exit Poll
Male	49%	44%
Female	51%	56%
18-24	9%	3%
25-34	14%	8%
35-44	19%	15%
45-54	19%	17%
55-64	16%	22%
65+	23%	34%
Working FT	46%	36%
Working PT	16%	15%
Retired	17%	39%
Student	7%	2%
Other	13%	8%
AB	28%	28%
C1	31%	37%
C2	15%	13%
DE	26%	19%

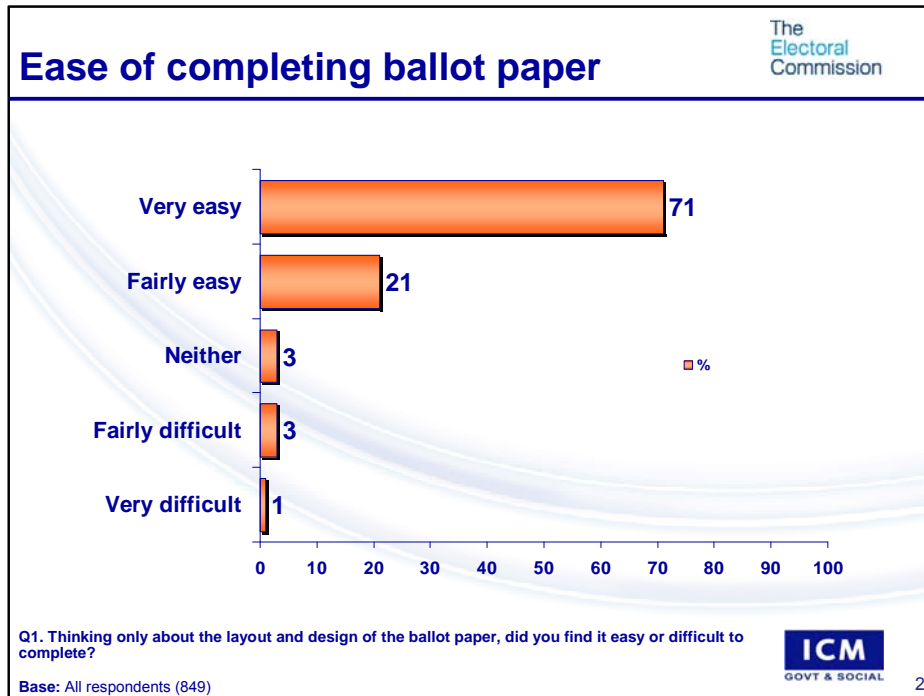
**3. Summary report**

The questionnaire was very short – containing only five questions – as it needed to be given the nature of exit interviewing, where people (by definition) are on their way to somewhere else. All questions were linked to the design and format of the ballot paper, plus one final question on satisfaction with the voting process.

**3.1 Ease of ballot paper completion**

We should consider that most people who voted in the by-election also voted (88%) in the preceding General Election (2005), and as such we should assume general familiarity with ballot papers. This may have contributed to the very strong finding that nearly all voters (93%) considered the by-election ballot paper to be easy to complete despite it being different from what they would had filled out previously. Indeed, the depth of ease is almost as strong as the range, with 71% of voters saying it was ‘very easy’ to complete, as opposed to 21% who simply considered it to be ‘fairly easy’.

Those who had difficulty (4%) were few and far between, while a similar number (3%) found it neither easy nor difficult.



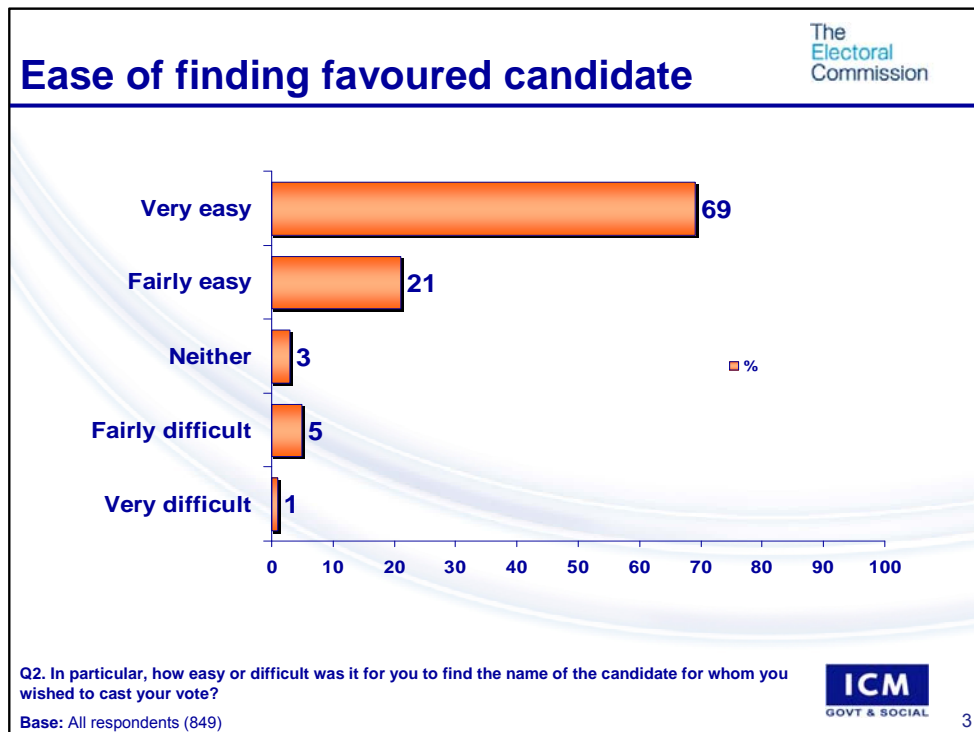
Very few differences emerge at demographic sub-group level – at least none that have statistical significance. There is no gender gap on ease of completion, trendless fluctuation across the age bands (with 45-54’s dropping to 89%), and no substantive variations by work status, social class, education level or voting history.

The level of difficulty among sub-groups also hardly varies from its 4% overall level, with only 45-54’s (6%) the unemployed (8%), those who completed their education at secondary school level (6%) and non-voters in 2005 (6%) showing a slightly higher propensity for difficulty. It is without doubt true to conclude that despite the number of candidates listed on the form and the double-columned nature of the design, voters instinctive reaction was that it was perfectly acceptable and easy to complete.

### 3.2 Ease of finding favoured candidate's name

Given the perceived ease of completing the form it would have come as a great surprise to find that many people couldn't find the name of their chosen candidate on it. While the number who had some difficulty in this regard is slightly higher (6%), it remains the case that the overwhelming majority (90%) again felt that it was easy to find the name of the candidate for whom they intended to cast their vote.

Seven in ten (69%) found it very easy to find the candidate's name, with 21% considering it to be fairly easy. Once again, the data is incredibly consistent across the demographic variables, with nothing of statistical significance to report. For example, the age break reveals a low point of ease at 89% among 45-54's, and a high point of 92% among 35-44's. Research rarely comes more consistent than this.



Even the small number of people who found it difficult to find their chosen candidate's name felt it was "fairly" (5%) rather than "very" difficult (1%) to do. Those groups who were slightly more inclined to find it difficult include the elderly (8% among those aged 65+), the unemployed (8%), C2s (8%) and those without any formal educational qualifications (9%).

### 3.3 Surprise to find two candidate columns

Some voters, however, were surprised to that the ballot paper contained two columns of candidate names. Overall, one in three (34%) was surprised, with 16% surprised a lot and 18% surprised just a little. Two in three (65%) were not at all surprised.

Those voters who were surprised appear to be disproportionately concentrated in specific demographic groups that have been historically reported to be somewhat less politically engaged than others. For example, 38% of 18-34's were surprised, as were a statistically significant 42% of DEs and a significant 45% of those without formal education. If the link between disengagement and surprise is accepted, it follows that some of those who turned out to vote on this occasion might not



have been following news of the by-election too closely, and thus their surprise might have been based more on the fact there were so many candidates actually standing, rather than the ballot paper containing two columns to accommodate them.

Most, however, were not surprised (65%). This group contains more men (66%) than women (64%); a high number of 55-64's (70%) but not 65+ (63%), and a statistically significantly higher number of both ABs (68%) and graduate level voters (70%).

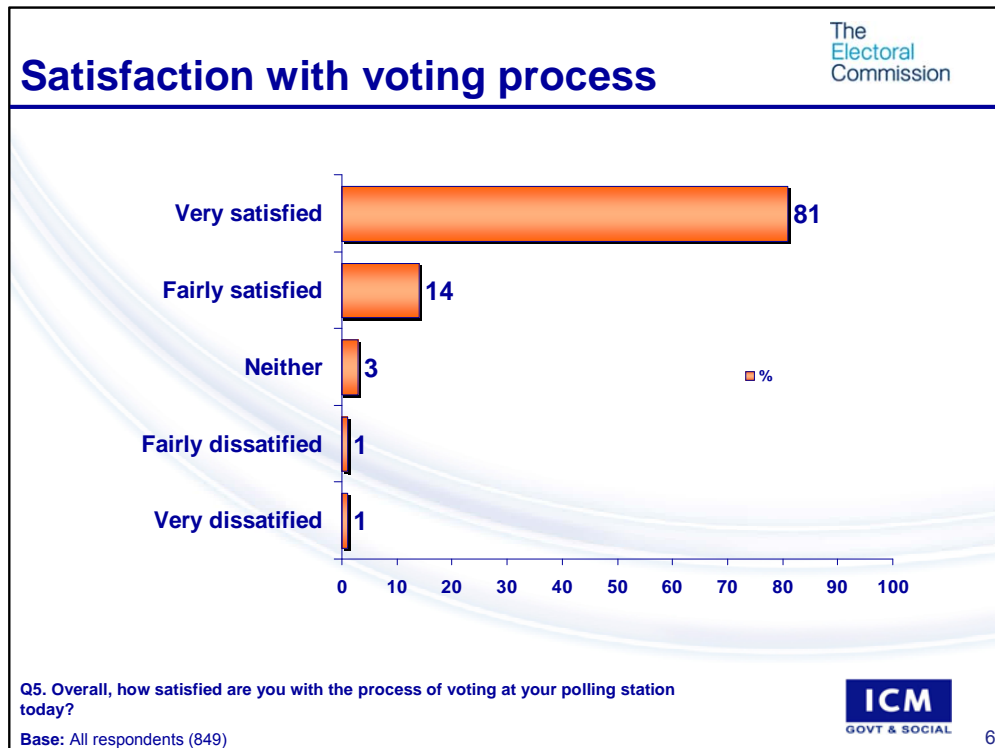
**3.4 Two columns vs one column**

For the most part, having two columns instead of one made no difference at all to people (77%), rather than making it more or less confusing. Indeed positively, more people said that having the two columns made it less confusing (12%) rather than more (9%).

Among the relatively small number who did find it confusing, women (12%) were twice as likely as men (6%) to say so, and 45-54's (13%) were also slightly more confused by the format than people of other ages. The only other group who felt it was more confusing were DEs (12%), although this particular differential response was not statistically significant when compared to other social grades.

**3.5 Satisfaction with process of voting**

There was little to trouble the voter in this by-election. The ballot form presented few difficulties as we have seen, and the rest of the voting experience was also positively received, given that a near universal number (95%) were satisfied with the process of voting. Four in five (81%) considered themselves to be 'very' satisfied, and 14% said they were 'fairly' satisfied. Obviously hardly anyone (2%) was dissatisfied.



Demographic splits are, once again, very consistent. There are no variations by gender, and the lowest level of satisfaction by age is (as high as) 91% among 18-34's. No significant variations are observed- other than the 4% of DEs who were *dissatisfied* compared to the 1% of C1s who were similarly negatively inclined.

There is little doubt that this by-election presented voters with few qualms or concerns. There may have been some media-reported grumbling among some members of the constituency electorate about having to turn out in the first place, but that clearly had little bearing on attitudes toward the format of the paper or the overall voter experience. With this in mind our research can offer little in the way of constructive criticism or detailed analysis – from their own perspective the electorate really were quite content with the voting process.

ICM RESEARCH  
BERKSHIRE HOUSE  
168-173 HIGH HOLBORN  
LONDON WC1V 7AA  
TEL: 020 7845 8344

JOB NO (1-6)  
SERIAL NO (7-10)  
CARD NO (11) 1

Hello, I am from ICM, the independent opinion research company. We are conducting research on behalf of the Electoral Commission about the ballot paper you just used. I wonder if you could spare a couple of minutes to answer some simple questions about it – not how you voted but what you thought of the design and layout of the paper itself.

Please be assured that all the answers you give will be treated in the strictest confidence, and none of your answers will be attributed to you.

If you have queries about this survey, please contact:

Martin Boon. ICM Research  
020 7845 8344.  
[martin.boon@icmresearch.co.uk](mailto:martin.boon@icmresearch.co.uk)

**□ INTERVIEWER TO COMPLETE ON EACH QUESTIONNAIRE**

Q: Location of polling station attended:

**WARD: Beverley Rural (12)**

Village Hall, Westgate, North Newbold

**WARD: Cottingham North (13)**

Polling station no 1. Mobile unit.  
Cottingham Pavilion Car Park.  
Northgate. Cottingham

Mobile Unit. Shopping precinct car park.  
Green Lane. Cottingham

**WARD: Cottingham South (14)**

Christ Church. Endyke Lane. Cottingham  
Croxyby C.P School. Lythe Avenue.  
Cottingham

Mobile Unit. Shops' Lay-by. The  
Parkway. Cottingham

**WARD: Dale (15)**

Elloughton Primary School. Stockbridge  
Road. Elloughton

Brough Primary School. Springfield  
Avenue. Elloughton

Polling station no 1. Welton Primary  
School. Elloughton Way.  
Brough

Polling station no2. Brough Methodist  
Church. Welton Road. Brough

**WARD: Howden (16)**

Shire Hall. Market Square. Howden

**WARD: Howdenshire (17)**

Polling station no 1. Gilberdyke  
Memorial Hall. Clementhorpe  
Road. Gilberdyke.

Polling station no1. Village Hall. High  
Street. Holme-upon-Spalding  
Moor

Room adjacent to Community Centre.  
Brighton Road. Bubwith

Methodist Chapel. Foggathorpe

**WARD: South Hunsley (18)**

North Ferriby Methodist Church  
Schoolroom. High Street. North  
Ferriby

Village Hall. 50, Church Road. North  
Ferriby

St. Barnabus Church Hall. Main Street.  
Swanland

**WARD: Tranby (19)**

Anlaby Village Hall. Hull Road. Anlaby

Christchurch United Reformed Church.  
South Ella Way. Anlaby

Mobile Unit. Amenity Area. Maplewood  
Avenue/Holly Tree Avenue  
junction. Anlaby Common

**WARD: Willerby & Kirk Ella (20)**

Scout/Guide Hall. Adjacent to Kirk Ella  
School. Mill Lane. Kirk Ella

St. Andrew's Church Memorial Hall.  
Beverley Road. Kirk Ella

Willerby & Kirk Ella Parish Institute.  
Main Street. Willerby

Scout HQ. Willerby Carr Lane C.P.  
School. Carr Lane. Willerby

**ASK ALL**

Q1 Here is a copy of the ballot paper you have just completed. I would like to ask you a few questions about it. Thinking only about the layout and design of the ballot paper, did you find it easy or difficult to complete? Was that very easy/difficult or fairly easy/difficult?

(21)

Very easy to complete	71%
Fairly easy to complete	21%
Neither easy nor difficult	3%
Fairly difficult to complete	3%
Very difficult to complete	1%
DK/can't remember	-

Q2 In particular, how easy or difficult was it for you to find the name of the candidate for whom you wished to cast your vote? Was it very easy/difficult or fairly easy/difficult?

(22)

Very easy to complete	69%
Fairly easy to complete	21%
Neither easy nor difficult	3%
Fairly difficult to complete	5%
Very difficult to complete	1%
DK/can't remember	*%

Q3 You will notice that the candidates are placed in two separate columns on the ballot paper. When you first saw the ballot paper were you surprised by this or not? IF SURPRISED: Is that lot or a little?

(23)

Yes – a lot	16%
Yes - a little	18%
No – not surprised	65%
Don't know	1%

Q4 Usually in Britain, the names of all the candidates are placed in one column rather than two. Do you think that having two columns rather than one made the ballot paper more confusing, less confusing, or did it not make much difference either way?

(24)

More confusing	9%
Less confusing	12%
Made no difference	77%
Don't know	1%

Q5 Overall, how satisfied are you with the process of voting at your polling station today? Would you say....READ OUT

(25)

Very satisfied	81%
Fairly satisfied	14%
Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	3%
Fairly dissatisfied	1%
Very dissatisfied	1%
DK/can't remember	*%

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

D1. Gender

(26)

Male	44%
Female	56%

D2. Age

(27)

18-24	3%
25-34	8%
35-44	15%
45-54	17%
55-64	22%
65-74	19%
75+	15%

D3. Working status

(28)

Working full time (30+ hrs per week)	36%
Working part time (1-29 hrs per week)	15%
Unemployed, seeking work	1%
Unemployed, not seeking work	3%
Retired	39%
Not working – disabled	1%
Student	2%
Other	2%

D4. Social grade

(29)

AB	28%
C1	37%
C2	13%
DE	19%

D5 What is the highest educational level that you have achieved to date?

(30)

No formal qualifications	16%
Secondary/high school/NVQ1-3	45%
University degree or equivalent professional qualification/NVQ4	25%
Higher degree	6%
None of these	6%
Refuse/DK	1%

D6 Thinking back to the last General Election to the House of Commons in May 2005, many people we have spoken to say they did not manage to vote. How about you? Did you manage to vote in that election?

(31)

Yes – voted	88%
No – did not vote	8%
No – too young	2%
Don't know/remember	1%

Interviewer declaration: I confirm that I have conducted this interview in line with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct and your instructions.

Signed: